

sociable in their habits, living and breeding in flocks, and the branches of some favorite tree may often be seen covered with their long pendent nests. The difference in size between the cock and the hen is considerable, although the plumage is the same. They are probably attracted to these plantations by the quantity of ripe "panpa" and banana. Large flocks of a small kind are seen at certain seasons of the year. I shot several, but only secured one, the undergrowth of brush and cane being so matted together by creepers and bush-ropes.

"I sometimes saw among the pines very handsome hawks. The cry of the "bean-bean" is always to be heard on the savannahs. It has a curious knob of skin at the base of the neck. In color it is a sort of dull drab, shaded underneath with white. In habits, this bird resembles the magpie, hopping on the ground and amongst the branches of the trees, in the same springy manner. The hen-hawk is very common among the pine walks in the savannahs, and large green parrots fly chattering overhead, morning and evening. Their flight is exceedingly rapid and powerful. Trogons, pigeons, and other birds were to be seen in the thickets, and a red-headed woodpecker. However, there are few land-birds there. The white crane is very shy and will not admit of a near approach. Some large snipe, and rarely, a muscovy duck, would rise from the sedge."

UPON AN UNDESCRIBED SPECIES OF MEGASCOLIDES FROM THE UNITED STATES.

BY FRANK SMITH.

Through the kindness of Mr. R. W. Doane of the Washington Agricultural College and School of Science at Pullman, Washington, I have recently received four specimens of a species of earthworm which I refer to the genus *Megascolides*. Mr. Doane writes me that this species is very abundant in that region of country and that their burrows are sometimes

seen extending to a depth of over fifteen feet, in cuts for new roads. I am also informed that much larger specimens than those sent me, are often found.

The specimens were killed at a time when they were not at the height of sexual activity, and are not in perfect condition for histological study, hence I have prepared this preliminary description to be followed by a more extended account after the receipt of more material.

MEGASCOLIDES AMERICANUS n. sp.

Alcoholic specimens are 18–19 cm. in length and .6–.7 cm. in diameter. The number of somites in four specimens averages 226 with extremes of 240 and 190. The prostomium is incomplete. The clitellum is upon XIII | XXII and part of XXIII, and is incomplete ventrally. Median intersegmental genital papillae are present upon XIV | XV, XV | XVI and XVI | XVII, and paired intersegmental papillae upon XIX | XX and XX | XXI. The median papillae are wanting upon one specimen. Oviducal pores paired on XIV. Spermiducal pores paired on XVIII. Setae paired, those of the inner pairs being closer together than those of the outer ones and all in the ventral half of the worm. Penial setae having ornamented distal part are present in XVIII. There are dorsal pores posterior to the clitellum.

The septa VII | VIII to XII | XIII inclusive are much thickened and are connected with each other by longitudinal fibres, while the septum VI | VII is less thickened and that of V | VI is quite thin. The pharynx has a thick dorsal wall. A powerful gizzard is present in V. The oesophagus is enlarged in each of the somites XII | XIV where the walls are thick and vascular, while somites XI and XV have smaller enlargements. The intestine begins at XIX, but does not attain its greatest diameter until it reaches XXI. The nephridia are diffuse and begin as far forward as IV. They are numerous in each of the somites containing them and large in none. Each somite has numerous nephridiopores. The dorsal vessel is single. Swollen vascular arches or

“ hearts ” are present in X–XIII, the posterior ones being the largest.

Testes and large conspicuous spermiducal funnels are present in X and XI, sperm sacs in XI and XII, ovaries in XIII and spermathecæ in VIII and IX. The sperm ducts of either side unite in XVI to form a common duct. The pair of spermiducal glands is in XVIII. They are tubular and much contorted and form flattened masses of considerable size. The terminal part forms a muscular duct which opens to the exterior laterad of the penial setæ, though in the same pore. The common sperm duct of either side unites with the spermiducal gland of its own side at the proximal part of the muscular duct.

Three species of earthworms quite closely allied to *M. americanus* have been described from the Pacific Coast region by Eisen and by Benham under the generic names *Argilophilus* and *Plutellus*, which have since been included by Beddard in the genus *Megascolides*; but the great majority of the nearly related worms are found in the Australian region. *M. americanus* differs from its North American relatives in the presence of numerous small nephridia in each somite instead of two large ones, in the extent of the clitellum and in several other characters.

Our knowledge of the proper classification of species included by different writers in the genera *Megascolides*, *Cryptodrilus*, *Argilophilus* and *Plutellus* is at present in a very unsatisfactory state, but the species described above is quite certainly a *Megascolides*.

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BIRDS OF NEW GUINEA.

BY GEO. S. MEAD.

(Continued from Vol. XXX, page 710.)

Merops ornatus—the Variegated Bee-eater, according to Dr. Bennett the harbinger of spring in Australia, is abundant in New Guinea where it is sometimes seen in enormous flocks or succession of flocks, flying easily but not ceaselessly as if on mi-